GRETTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

of the

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the year 1925.

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

In accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health this Report is more comprehensive than has heretofore been customary, for it includes particulars of Public Health improvements which have been effected during the past five years. Mortality and Morbidity Statistics for that period are also included.

As this is but one of fifteen Reports which I am submitting to as many Authorities its size and scope are necessarily more curtailed than would be the case were I merely acting for a single District.

The subjects dealt with are systematized under the following six headings:-

Natural and Social Conditions of the Area.
General Provision of Health Services in the Area.
Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.
Housing.
Inspection and Supervision of Food.
Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious Diseases.

## I. NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres) ..... 12,301.
Population Census, 1921. ..... 1,405.
" Estimated, 1925..... 1,374.

## Physical Features and General Character of the Area.

The District, whose greatest length from N.E. to S.W. is about nine miles, covers an area of some twenty square miles. It is chiefly undulating grass land, well wooded in parts, with a fall towards the river Welland.

Fringing the Welland the geological formation is alluvium, and the flat grass lands are liable to periodic inundation. Skirting this is a belt of Upper Lias clay, on which are built the little villages of Rockingham and Harringworth and part of Wakerley.

Ascending the slope from the river we next encounter a narrow zone of Northampton sand, and it is on this that the greater part of the village of Gretton is built.

For the bulk of the District the formation is Lincolnshire Oolite Limestone. Part of Gretton and most of Wakerley and Laxton are built on this. At Laxton we come on Upper Estuarine clays.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of inhabited houses (1921).... | 371 |
| Rateable Value ..... | £18,478 |
| Sum represented by a penny rate..... | £56 |

## Social Conditions.

There is a small hosiery factory at Gretton and a small percentage of the male population is engaged in ironstone working or employed outside the District. The major part of the population is engaged in agriculture.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND COMBINED DISTRICT.

Kirby Muxloe,

Leicester.

9th April, 1926.

Sir,

Uppingham Rural District and
Gretton Rural District Annual
Reports for 1925.

On pages 2 and 3 of these Reports I give Birth, Death and Infant Rates for 1901 - 05. This should be 1921 - 25. I regret error. Please correct it.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) J.M. O'Connor.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Secretary,
Ministry of Health.

## Vital Statistics.

Births, legitimate. M. 13. F. 7. Total 20.

" illegitimate. nil.

| | |
|---|---|
| Birth Rate ..... | 14.5 |
| " " (1901 - 1905)..... | 13.0 |
| " " for England & Wales.. | 18.3 |

Deaths. M. 11 F. 6 Total, 17.

| | |
|---|---|
| Death Rate ..... | 12.3 |
| " " (1901 - 1905)..... | 13.0 |
| " " for England & Wales.. | 12.2 |

Deaths of Infants under one year of age - 2 (both legitimate)

| | |
|---|---|
| Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 Births | - 100 |
| " " " (1901 - 1905) | - 55 |
| " " " for England & Wales | - 75. |

## Causes of Death in 1925.

### Civilians only.

| Causes of Death:- | Males. | Females. |
|---|---|---|
| All Causes ..... | 11 | 6. |
| Influenza ..... | - | - |
| Cancer, malignant disease ..... | 3 | 2 |
| Cerebral Haemorrhage etc..... | - | 2 |
| Heart disease ..... | 2 | - |
| Bronchitis ..... | 1 | - |
| Parturition, apart from puerperal Fever | 1 | - |
| Congenital debility etc..... | 1 | - |
| Suicide ..... | 1 | - |
| Violence, apart from suicide ..... | 1 | 1 |
| Other defined diseases ..... | - | 1 |
| Causes ill-defined or unknown..... | 1 | - |

| Ages at death:- | No. |
|---|---|
| Under one year..... | 2 |
| 50 and under 60..... | 1 |
| 60 " " 70 ..... | 3 |
| 70 " " 80 ..... | 6 |
| 80 " " 90 ..... | 5 |

## II. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Tuberculosis:-

Dispensaries have been provided by the County Council at Northampton, Wellingborough and Kettering and a Sanatorium for 70 patients has been established in extensive grounds near Rushden. Sixty patients from the County are treated under this scheme leaving ten beds for War Pensioners or to be let to other local authorities or to private patients. The accommodation provides for 28 men, 28 women and 14 children.

Maternity and Child Welfare:-

This is controlled by a Committee of the County Council.

Fever:-

There is a small iron hospital at Uppingham to which cases could if necessary be removed. It is, however, too inadequate to be regarded as a suitable isolation hospital and we are authorized in special circumstances to send cases to the Stamford Infirmary Isolation Hospital.

Small Pox:-

There is no provision in the District. Removal to the Uppingham Iron Hospital is authorized but as the provision is inadequate and there is no transport we should probably have to rely on home isolation. It is over twenty years since a case occurred in the District. On that occasion all in touch with the case being promptly vaccinated we had no difficulty in isolating the patient in his own home.

Should any opportunity arise of combining with other Authorities for the provision or use of a hospital you would be well advised to take advantage of it.

Ambulance Facilities:-

(a) For Infectious Cases. None in the District. The Stamford Infirmary provides its own ambulance.

(b) For Non-infectious Cases & Accident. None in the District. The Infirmaries provide them.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority:-

The District is combined with fourteen other Districts for the retention of a whole time Medical Officer of Health and is combined with the Uppingham Rural District for the provision of a whole time Sanitary Surveyor and Inspector. Half the salary of each of these officials is contributed by an Exchequer Grant.

Professional Nursing in the Home:-

(a) General - The County Council's Health Visitors are available for this in common with other Districts throughout the County. There are no special arrangements under the District Council. There is a District Nurse at Rockingham.

(b) For Infectious Diseases - No provision.

Midwives:-

Three Midwives practise in the area one of whom resides within it.

Chemical Work:-

Samples of water are analysed by the Medical Officer of Health. Two samples were submitted in 1925.

Legislation in Force:-

No Acts have been adopted. I am of opinion that the sections of the various Adoptive Acts which confer additional powers on the Council without creating obligations should all be adopted.

## III. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

### Water Supply.

At Harringworth spring water gravitates to the village and is distributed by stand pipe and troughs. The supply for the other villages is from springs and shallow wells. From year to year I have analysed many samples from the latter.

## Rivers and Streams.

Four villages to which I have referred are drained directly by the river Welland. From three of them, Rockingham, Harringworth and especially Gretton, sewage is reaching the river untreated. There are no trade effluents and the quantity is but small, and some measure of purification is effected in dykes and ditches before the sewage reaches the stream. Yet there is sufficient river pollution taking place to call for rectification, chiefly at Gretton, where the fall being more than ample, there should be no difficulty in supplementing tanking by land treatment. My recommendation has been concurred in by the County Medical Officer.

## Drainage and Sewerage.

The villages, though old, are for the most part sufficiently well sewered, and prior to the war several extensions and improvements were completed, more especially in Gretton.

## Closet Accommodation Scavenging.

The village of Gretton is scavenged weekly. In this village there are about a hundred movable receptacles for night soil, and water-carriage is employed in eight instances. The other villages being very small do not possess a public scavenger. At Laxton all pits have already been replaced by pail-closets, and insanitary pits have also been abolished throughout the greater part of Wakerley. I would urge you to continue this salutary abolition until not a single insanitary pit is left in any of your villages.

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## Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

### Sanitary Surveyor's and Inspector's Report for 1925.

| | |
|---|---|
| Total No. of complaints received during the year ..... | 0 |
| " " " inspections made for all purposes..... | 297 |
| " " " notices served - Informal - 17. Statutory | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Insanitary Houses | No. cleansed ..... | 8 |
| Overcrowding:- | No. of houses inspected..... | 3 |
| | Nuisances abated ..... | nil |
| Offensive Accumulations | Nuisances abated ..... | 6 |

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION (Estimated)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total No. in District | (1) Privies ..... | 20 |
| | (2) Pail closets ..... | 230 |
| | (3) W.C's ..... | 45 |
| Water closets | No. of new provided ..... | - |

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Drains, drain traps etc. | No. inspected ..... | 52 |
| | Nuisances abated ..... | 12 |

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Houses | No. inspected ..... | 25 |
| | No. of inspections made..... | 41 |
| | No. disinfected ..... | 4 |

### Schools.

There is an excellent modern Public Elementary School at Gretton and there are older schools in the little villages of Harringworth and Rockingham.

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## IV. H O U S I N G.

1. General Housing Conditions:-

Speaking generally the housing conditions are rather above than below what I conceive to be the average for an agricultural Rural District. More picturesque they certainly are but unfortunately this does not go hand in hand with perfect hygiene.

There are about a dozen overcrowded houses in the District.

Every working-class dwelling in the District has been inspected and when necessary re-inspected, some of them repeatedly, since 1918 and particulars of all are recorded in the Housing Register. The number of working-class houses in each of the six parishes is as follows:- Gretton 158, Harringworth 57, Rockingham 35, Wakerley 28, Laxton 21, and Fineshade 8. A total of 307.

With a decreasing population only 13 houses have been built in the District during the past five years, eight of these being Council houses erected at Gretton. This is the only parish in which new houses are really required and in the opinion of the Surveyor ten more houses should be provided. The more pressing need here as in most Rural Districts for which I am Medical Officer of Health is re-conditioning. It seems to be probable that a subsidy will shortly be available for this purpose and I am one of those who have consistently maintained that it is the best manner in which a subsidy could be utilized. The Council has offered a subsidy of £75 for houses to be built under the 1923 - 24 Acts but so far not a single application has been received. It would be otherwise with re-conditioning. Applications would I believe be numerous and the public money expended would lead to a vast improvement in working-class dwellings.

In the village of Wakerley a number of cottages have been re-thatched and other structural repairs have been completed during the year.

Only one house was built in the District during the year, a residential house at Laxton.

The following tabulation is submitted in accordance with the Ministry's instructions:-

UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

I. Inspection:-

| | |
|---|---|
| No. of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910. | 21 |

| | |
|---|---|
| No. of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. | nil |
| No. of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. | 9 |

II. Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notice:-

| | |
|---|---|
| No. of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers. | 14 |

III. Action under Statutory Powers:-

| | |
|---|---|
| (A) Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act, 1919. | nil |
| (B) Proceedings under Public Health Acts. | nil |
| (C) Proceedings under Sections 17 & 18 of the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act, 1909. | nil. |

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## V. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply:-

There are 19 cow-keepers and dairy-men on the Register for supplying the local population with milk. Twenty-one inspections of premises were made during the year and premises were found on the whole to be maintained satisfactorily.

(b) Meat:-

There are five registered slaughter-houses. Seventeen inspections were made the general condition as to sanitation and cleanliness being satisfactory. There is no difficulty as to inspection of meat at time of slaughter

(c) Other Foods:-

No special action was needed with regard to other foods.

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## VI. PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Five cases of Scarlet Fever were notified one being at Rockingham, the infection in this instance being probably imported from outside the District. The other four cases were reported at Gretton in November. Nine further cases being suspected towards the close of December I visited these and two others on the last day of the year. I found all eleven to be suffering from German Measles of a type which I, with others, am predisposed to regard as a separate disease and which was tentatively called "Fourth Disease" by the late Dr. Dukes of Rugby. It is not improbable that the four earlier cases were of a similar nature. All were of a trivial type as indeed are most cases of Scarlet Fever met with to-day.

During the past five years only ten cases of Scarlet Fever (or six if we exclude the last four at Gretton) have been recorded in the District. Two of them which occurred in Laxton in 1924 were removed to the small iron hospital at Uppingham.

It is seldom necessary, and in my opinion is often inadvisable, to send cases of Scarlet Fever to Hospital. My consistent experience for twenty-eight years in nearly every District with which I have had to deal, is that hospital Isolation has consistently failed to reduce its prevalence. The reasons for this somewhat paradoxical circumstance are explained in various reports which I have submitted or am submitting to other Authorities.

I record two notifications of Pneumonia which with two in 1924, make a total of four for the past five years. There is in my opinion no need whatever for the compulsory notification of this disease.

Two cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Consumption) complete the notifications for 1925. Both were railway employees residing respectively at Wakerley and Gretton.

The total notifications of all kinds received during the past five years were as follows:-

| | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 | Total. | Deaths. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scarlet Fever | - | 1 | - | 4 | 5 | 10 | - |
| Erysipelas | - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Pneumonia | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Pulmonary Tuberculosis | 1 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Other forms of " | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 |

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

With the exception of one small Hosiery Factory at Gretton there are no factories or workshops save of course such of the latter as are common to all Rural Districts. One saddler's, one boot repairer's and five bakehouses complete the quotum. All the latter are regularly inspected and are kept in good order.

Inspection during 1925:-

| | Number. | Written Notices. |
|---|---|---|
| Factories ... | 5 | 1 |
| Workshops ... | 10 | - |
| Total:- | 15 | 1 |

Defects Found:-

Sanitary accommodation (not separate for sexes)- One case which was referred to H. M. Inspector.

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I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. E. O'CONNOR,

Medical Officer of Health.

Kirby Muxloe,
Leicester,
March 18th, 1926.